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Joseph's Entertainment of his Brethren :

I N A
S E R M O N

Preached at the


Herefordshire Feast

A T

S^t MARY-LE-BOW,

June the 25th. 1684.

BY

WILLIAM BOLTON, One of the School-
Masters of the *Charter-House*. 

L O N D O N,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILIP H. RAVEN

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

WILLIAM L. RAY

1881-1882

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Gen. 43. Vers. 34.

And he took, and sent Messes unto them, from before him (but Benjamin's Mess was five times so much, as any of theirs,) and they drank, and were merry with him.

WHEN I look into the Sacred Writings, I cannot sufficiently admire at the Power, as well as Goodness of the Lord, in defeating Satan, by those very means, whereby the old Serpent brought ruin to our first Parents: Man may now eat and live; and the Devil may cease to boast of his conquest over Mankind in Paradise, when he tempted to eat of the forbidden tree: For if Man do not contribute to his own destruction, and misuse those Creatures which God hath afforded for his benefit, for the intercourse of Love and Friendship, as well as stay and support of his life, he may go into a better Paradise, than that from which our first Parents were driven. Here's no Angel now with a flaming Sword, to bar us from entering those more sacred Mansions, and eating and drinking are become the Symbols,

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not onely of Christ's love to us, as in the holy Eucharist, but of our love and kindness one towards another. Take a survey of God's Church in all ages, and you will find the men thereof, (whether after any great mercy received, or a resolution of entring into a more familiar acquaintance) still entertaining one another with these tokens of amity, *eating* and *drinking* together. The *Jews* of old had a feast at the end of their Sacrifices; and the Primitive Christians, if not in the very Apostles times, I am sure immediately afterwards, their *ἀγάπας*, or *Love-feasts*, after the Lord's Supper: That feasting, or publick eating and drinking together, were the tyes of Union and Confederacy amongst men, Satan knew well enough, therefore he encouraged this Custome also amongst his Profelytes and Followers. Would *Ab-salom* slay his brother *Amnon*? A feast is made the snare to entrap him. But that I may bring this somewhat home to our own selves; have several degrees and orders of men, whether in relation to their being born in the same Countrey, or otherwise, met together, first to celebrate God's praises in his own House, and afterwards adjourning to some Common Hall, there engaged one another, in their duty towards their Prince, their adherence to the Succession of the Crown in the right line, their Reciprocal love one with another, and the relieving the poor and necessitous? Have good and loyal men, as now, met together for this end and purpose? And have not the *Catlines* of our age, had their Cabals, and Affociations too, for the ruine of their, I had almost said, too Gracious King, and his Royal Brother,

ther, for the Subversion of the Laws, and their Country, and afterwards of themselves too; as their Forefathers in the last Rebellion found it? What else meant their Kings-head, or Green-Ribbon Clubs, where many affronts to Sacred Majesty were first hammered, before they received their Polishing by Votes in another place? But Absalom hath a vow to be performed in Hebron: Tickets are therefore sent abroad by the Underminers of our Israel, which, forsooth, must be ushered in, with the Pageantry of a Sermon too; but this their solemn Appearance was baffled and disappointed by Authority; an happy presage, without doubt, of our deliverance from the effects of it, I mean, the late Damnable and Fanatick Plot. I mention these and the like, to acquaint you, that it was the custome of all Ages, for men, whether for good or bad designs, to strengthen one another, by *eating and drinking* together; and therefore long before the Law was given, you find Joseph entertaining his brethren after the same manner; witness the words of my Text; *And he took, and sent Messes unto them, from before him, and they drank, and were merry with him.* The words do acquaint us, how Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Patriarch Jacob, constituted by Pharaoh, Lord of Egypt, and inferiour to the King thereof, onely in Name and Title, entertained his eleven brethren, which twelve gave denomination afterwards to the twelve Tribes or Counties of Israel: So that you see, my Text, and this solemn Appearance of so many of the same Country, do agree, and carry a Resemblance one with each other.

In handling of which words, I shall doe these things.

First, I shall shew you, what that place and dignity was, which *Joseph* enjoyed, at this entertainment of his brethren: *And he*, that is, the Lord of the Countrey; for *Joseph* had not as yet discovered himself to his brethren.

Secondly, The Reason why.

Thirdly, The manner how he entertained his brethren; *And he took, and sent Messes unto them, from before him, and they drank, and were merry with him.*

Fourthly, I shall endeavour to vindicate such Meetings as this.

Fifthly and lastly, by way of Application, from the Consideration of the person *entertaining*, and the parties *entertained*. I shall propose some Practical Inferences, fitting for such Assemblies.

I. First therefore, as to the Place and Dignity, &c.

I might here give you an Historical account of *Joseph* before his promotion; as what he suffered in *Canaan* from his unnatural brethren, and likewise what befell him in *Egypt*, from the seventeenth year of his age, when he was sold, to his thirtieth, when he was advanced by *Pharaoh*, the King thereof; but I consider, 'tis but your turning at your leisure to the last part of *Genesis*, and you have a plain, as full, relation of him.

As to the Place and Dignity, which he held at this entertainment; it was as great as a Sovereign Prince was able to confer upon him, or a Subject capable of

of receiving: *Forasmuch, saith Pharaoh, chap. 41. vers. 30. and so on, as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet, and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; onely in the Throne will I be greater than thou.* A Commission you see very large, and therefore though the occasion and the circumstance of the time of *Joseph's* advancement might seem to countenance, yet I cannot subscribe to their conjectures, who would allow *Joseph* no other than a *Præfectus Annona*, who was to take care of the Corn, that the people of the land might not suffer famine; Although I shall grant, that this place of Trust, was very honourable, not onely in *Egypt*, but other Nations; so honourable amongst the *Romans*, that *Pompey* the Great, after he had subdued *Mithridates*, the most powerfull Prince of *Asia*; nay after he had triumphed, over a great part of the World, thought it an honour to have this of *Præfectus Annona* added to his other Titles: Though this Dignity, I say, was very great, and *Joseph* particularly executed this Office also; yet his authority was greater: He managed all affairs of State; he had the power of Life and Death, of making War, and Peace; in a word, he had the whole sway of Government devolved upon him: The authority of such Regents (as *Joseph* was constituted in this Chapter) was of that figure and estimation in the world, both then, and afterwards, that they were many times mistaken for the Kings themselves, by people of other Nations. *Joseph's* brethren, I am sure, took him for such, witness those words

of theirs to their Father, chap. 42. vers. 30. *The man who is the Lord of the Land*; and again, *the Lord of the Countrey*: Nay the *Egyptian* Historiographers inserted several of these Regents amongst the Kings themselves, otherwise their Catalogue must be very imperfect, and never to be reconciled; And such was the *Soldans* power afterwards in *Egypt*, under the *Caliphs*; such the Masters of the Palace, under the old Kings of *France*; and such the Grand *Viziers*, perhaps at this time in the *Turkish* Dominions: Such, so great in Authority, as well as Piety and Wisdom, as the Scripture informs us, was the person, who took and sent Messes unto his brethren. Which brings me to my second Particular.

II. The Reason why *Joseph* entertained them at a Feast or Banquet. Ten of his brethren had been with him before, to buy Corn; to whom he then seemed rough and severe, either to make them repent of their former usage towards him, or fearing, that they might have been, as cruel to *Benjamin*, his onely Brother by the same Mother, as before to him; he charged them therefore as Spies, secured one of them in bonds, till the rest brought *Benjamin* with them into *Egypt*: Let but him once appear, the scene is altered; and all the Clouds of *Joseph's* seeming indignation are gone and vanished, and they might even then, before he discovered himself unto them, have read the kindness of a brother; As soon as they come to Court, *Joseph* immediately commands, *Kill and slay, for these men shall dine with me*. And now *Joseph's* brethren may lay aside all fear; this following

lowing banquet, to which they are invited, gives them more than hopes, both of their own safety, and the Prince's favour: *Simeon* is released, and all of them from suspected spies find themselves graced with dining with *the Lord of the Countrey*: A Banquet is thought by *Joseph* to be the best way of receiving them, both as their Brother, and their Lord: They had enough paid that adoration, and obedience to him, of which he had formerly dreamed, and which had caused their malice against him; he had with joy often understood their Repentance, as to what they had formerly done to him; he views his brother *Benjamin*, grown to mans estate, whom he had left in *Canaan* a little child; and can scarcely forbear embracing him, and discovering by his tenderness, who he was; he is satisfied that his Father is well; he can therefore now no longer treat them, as theirs and the *Egyptians* Lord, but thinks it high time to consult his brotherly affections too: Which to effect, he orders, that they should dine with him; and this was the most ready and natural means, that *Joseph* could make use of, or indeed his brethren expect; had they then known, how nearly he was related to them: And therefore, in the book of *Esther*, *Haman*, in my opinion, urged very well; (though the Event, through his demerits, proved otherwise,) that *Ahasuerus* his King did design him favour, when he admitted him of all his Courtiers to dine with him. Eating and drinking together, ever was a token of friendship amongst all people: Insomuch, that I read of the *Romans* afterwards, that they had their Annual *Charistia*,
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like to our Countrey feasts at this time, when kinsfolk and relations met together, to confirm, saith my Authour, their friendship one with another, and reconcile all different parties, who had lived in any variance before. Fancie therefore, Beloved, the twelve brethren sate down at dinner; *Joseph* indeed, as a Prince, served at a Table by himself; as it is before my Text; but as a brother too, he admits them to dine in the same room near unto him: which leads me to my other particular, *viz.*

III. The manner how he entertained them; *And he took and sent Messes unto them, from before him; and they drank, and were merry with him.*

I shall not, as some have done upon the words, lay down any Critical questions; as whether it was alway a custome for Princes to sit alone at Table by themselves, by way of State and Grandeur; or whether sitting, as here in *Egypt*, or lying along, as amongst the *Romans*, and the *Jews* from them in our Saviour's time, bore the most ancient date; or whether it hath been a practice for Princes to send dishes from their own Table to their Favourites, as is reported of *Cyrus* amongst the *Persians*, *Agessilaus* amongst the *Grecians*, and several of the *Roman* Emperours? or why the *Egyptians*, as in the Context, sate at one Table by themselves, and the *Hebrews* at another by themselves; Neither farther shall I enquire, what the Messes were, which *Joseph* sent to his brethren, taking it for granted, that they were rich and sumptuous,

sumptuous, such as might set forth his magnificence, as well as kindness; neither, lastly, shall I ask, why *Benjamin* had *five times so much as the rest*, as you read in my Text, points indeed incident enough to my Theme, but wholly averse to my design, which is not to nauseate you with intricate questions, a trouble both to the Commentators themselves, and their Readers too.

But I must not omit the giving you the genuine signification of the last words of the Text, *viz. They drank, and were merry.* At the first view thereof, the Debauchees of our, as well as of Saint *Austin's* age, might hug themselves, with having *Joseph* a Pious and Wise man, yet a Patron of their excess and drunkenness: Let therefore the same Father's answer serve the men of our, as well as his time. The word in the Hebrew, saith he, signifies to drink *plentifully*, or *cheerfully*, by way of refreshment onely; and it is applied even to inanimate Creatures: Thus *Psal. 65. v. 9. Inebriasti terram*, thou hast refreshed, or watered the Earth; which being there acknowledged, as a gift of God, cannot be taken in a bad sense. If this will not satisfy, let them read the 2^d Chapter of St. *John*, where they will find the same word with the Septuagint in my Text; and upon the Occasion of a Feast too; which Feast the blessed Jesus did not onely grace with his own presence, but honoured it also with the first miracle he wrought; and as after his Resurrection he made himself known to his Disciples by breaking of bread; so here at the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee*, he manifested him-

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self by turning water into wine ; as if thereby he designed, not onely to supply their present necessity, but remove such scruples, as men of more niceness than piety might afterwards raise : which brings me to my fourth and last Particular, *viz.*

IV. To endeavour to vindicate such Meetings as this of ours. And of this too, I shall be short, as having hinted at it in the Preface to my Sermon ; neither do I think it fitting to trouble such Meetings as this with any long discourses.

And this I shall doe from the practice of the Patriarchs before the Law, of the *Jews* under the Law ; I might add of the *Gentiles* under the Law of nature, and finally of the Primitive Christians (a body made up of *Jews* and *Gentiles*) under the Gospel. Let three Angels visit *Abraham*, the Father of the faithfull ; he orders a Calf to be drest to entertain them ; and so far were they from being offended at his courteous invitation, though they had no need of it, that, *Gen.* 18. 5. they commanded him to *doe as he had said* ; and my Text acquaints us, how *Joseph* entertained his brethren.

Under the Law, I might give you many examples ; I shall name but one ; yet such an one, as was annually kept for many succeeding years ; from *Judas Macchabeus*, till our blessed Saviour's time ; and then it was so far from being discountenanc'd by our Lord, that he himself justified the observation of it, by his own presence. *Josephus* acquaints us very succinctly, with the reason of
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that Feast: When *Judas Macchabæus* had re-established the Service of the Temple, which had been for a long time polluted by the Heathens, both he and his Countrey-men solemnized a Feast: And this, without doubt, gave occasion to the Primitive Christians, of instituting their *Encœnia*, or annual Feasts at the Consecration of their Churches, the same with our Countrey Wakes, so generally observed, I am sure in those places where I lived in *Herefordshire*; though perhaps the Reason thereof not so well known.

Our Saviour's Parable of the Prodigal Son is much to the same purpose: Let the Penitent Son return to his home, as well as his duty; the indulgent and compassionate Father commands the best fatted Calf to be slain, to bid him welcome; And the presence of the blessed Jesus, at the two Feasts before mentioned, sufficiently declare his approbation of such Meetings. I shall not insist upon the Practice of the *Gentiles*, as knowing that of old, the *Hereticks called Cathari*, and the *Puritans now*, agreeable both in name and nature, did and do as falsely, as maliciously, decry such Feasts, as taking their rise from the custome of the Heathens.

Proceed we therefore to the times of Christianity. If we reade so seldom of Feasts amongst the ancient Fathers, 'tis because of the Persecution of God's Church in those Elder days; yet even then we shall not want sufficient Testimonies: *Τὰς ἡμέρας τῶν ἑορτῶν φυλάσσειτε*, was a Canon of *St. Clement*, whom *St. Paul* makes mention of in his Epistles, and who was the first *Roman Bishop* of both the *Gentile* and *Jewish* Churches; and who

within one remove, succeeded the blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, not onely in the then pure and untainted See of Rome, but in their Martyrdom too.

Theodoret is copious, how he and other Christians kept such Feasts ; And at the *Dypticks*, or Commemoration of famous men, who sealed their faith in Christ with their blood ; the Primitive Christians did indulge themselves, and take a greater repast than at other times. *Nazianzen* in several places gives us his concurrence with us : We keep Festival-days, saith he in one place ; and in his Oration in *Sanctum Baptisma*, at the beginning thereof, he seems to contest for such Meetings against the Hereticks of his time : It is fitting, saith he, that men should annually celebrate, and rejoice in such, and such days ; and then names the days ; either wherein they were born, or baptized, or married, *vel locum aliquem primi incoluerunt*, agreeable to our Countrey feast at this time ; and then, as if he despised the unreasonable Cavils of the Hereticks, by an allusion to the Pagan Rites and Ceremonies, he declares how Pious and Orthodox Christians did solemnize their Feasts. After this manner, from that Father, the stout and learned Prelate *Mountague* informs me, *That Mountague, who asserted the cause of our Establish't Church, not onely against Baronius, that Bulwark of the Papal Chair, but the Puritans likewise, and those also backed by an House of Commons too ; yet did not that daunt him from taking off the Fig-leaves that Party had put on, to hide, if it were possible, their errors and enmity to our Church.* I must confess, that

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St. *Ambrose* often blamed the Christians for their riot and excess at such Meetings; and particularly chid them for immoderately drinking the Emperour's health; And though the drinking of the Prince's health, was decreed by the Senate, to *Augustus Caesar*, and never, as I have read, cancell'd by any Edict of Christian Emperours; yet *Peter Urfinus*, in his Appendix, cites St. *Ambrose*, speaking of the Custome of his time: *Bibamus, inquit, pro salute Imperatoris, &c.* Let us drink, say they, the Emperour's health, &c. That good Father, to any unbiass'd Reader, doth not so much find fault with the thing it self, as with the ill manner of doing it: And the general practice of the Loyal, and consequently the best part of our Nation, doth explain His present Majesty's Proclamation, as to the drinking of his Health, viz. that it doth not so much forbid the thing, as the excess therein; and that we should not impair our own health, whilst we wish his. And this shall serve for the Explication of my Text; I shall now beg your patience for the Applicatory part, and I have done.

First therefore, from *Joseph's* thus courteously entertaining his ten brothers, who before had been so cruel, barbarous and unnatural to him, as the Scriptures will fully inform you: Let me recommend that grand duty of Christianity, of pardoning your Enemies, and forgiving those, whom you may fancy, have done you any injury. To encourage you to which duty, I shall intreat your leave to propose a new and living example to you, but

but such an one, as is not impertinent either to my Text, or this Loyal Assembly; the Motto of whose chief Town, *Invisæ fidelitatis præmium*, proclaims their constant fidelity to their Prince, even in the worst of times; much more now, when Schism and Faction, when Sedition and Rebellion are wisely, as justly, discountenanc'd and punished, and all men are, or pretend to be so, Loyalists: You may easily judge whom I mean, without my naming our present Sovereign, between whom and *Joseph* there seems a great resemblance. Compare their Age, you will find them both commencing at the same time in their Miseries, and in their Glory: *Both of them about the same years were forced from their Native Country; the one by unnatural brethren, the other by more inhumane Subjects.* But our King's Persecutions were greater than *Joseph's*; He was but the eleventh Son, and so could not expect any great inheritance, whilst our King was the eldest, and heir to three flourishing Kingdoms. *Joseph*, when he was sold, had the comfort not to fear any hurt to be offered to *Jacob*; whilst our disconsolate Sovereign laments his Father, as murdered by the worst of Villains, and that under a Mock-shew of Justice: *Joseph* had but one brother *Benjamin* to be concerned for, our Prince had two, the one indeed a Companion of his Exile and miseries, but young *Glocester* exposed to the barbarity of Hypocritical Rakehells, whose very Mercy did threaten more, than others Cruelty; for if they should for their own ends, as the old King feared, have forced the Crown upon his Head, he knew 'twould be like the

the Royal slaves, amongst the *Persians*, to sacrifice him afterwards: Besides, our King had many Loyal Subjects, continually harass'd with Plunders, Sequestrations, and such-like tenderesses of the pretended Saints, nay even with Death it self, which could not but grieve his Princely heart. Farther, there was this difference between the brethren of the one, and the Rebels against the other: *The one sold Joseph, that they might not be branded as Murtherers of their brother; The other proffer'd one thousand pound for his Person, that they might, without doubt, doubly dye their accursed hands with the bloud of the Son, as well as the Father.* And thus much as to their Sufferings. Now let us view them in their glory and power, and see how the one treated his offending, but penitent, brethren; the other, *His then, I wish to God, they may not still prove his Rebellious Subjects; And the last Plot doth more than justifie such fears.* But let us view them in their Glory. The Scripture acquaints us, that *Joseph, when he was thirty years old, stood before Pharaoh, and received that Royal Commission of governing the land of Egypt; and none of you are ignorant, at what age God bless'd these Kingdoms, with the happy return of our present Sovereign.* Both of them came to their power; the one to a deputed, the other to his own by inheritance, by the very same means: *It was God, and God alone, who raised Joseph; and the same God, who restored Charles the Second; without making use of the boasted instruments, either of Canaanitish Brethren, or English Presbyterians: Joseph therefore, as soon as he had made*
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himself known to his brethren, chap. 45. vers. 8. for fear that they should plead, that their selling him, brought him into Egypt, and consequently to his promotion therein, tells them plainly to their faces, It was not ye that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a Father to Pharaoh; and a Ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. And in my opinion, Redeunte Carolo, was not onely an ingenious and witty, but a pious and solid argument, that one made use of, to prove the existence of God; for nothing less than an Almighty Arm could have so effected it.

Suppose them both in their full lustre and dignity; though we know who they were (those great Pretenders, and but Pretenders to the King's Restoration) who would have limited our Sovereign's just Power; and like *Philip*, the second King of *Spain*, to the Duke of *Alva*, would have our King govern, as the other complained, that he was sent to conquer Kingdoms with fetters and shackles on him.

Behold them both, I say, with their Sceptres in their hands, the one governing *Egypt* under *Pharaoh*, the other of his own right giving Laws to his *English*, and other Subjects. The Scripture tells us, that *Joseph* after two years, and the imprisonment of one of his Persecutours, for I cannot give them any other name, till his Clemency restored them to that affectionate title, which by their cruelty they had forfeited; I say, after he had imprisoned one of them for a long space, after he had often known their sorrow, as to what they had formerly done to him; instead of punishing those

those who had been so unnatural and barbarous to him; he kindly invites them to dine with him, and as in my Text, courteously entertains them, and which too, was onely an earnest of his future favours, for soon after with tears of joy he discovered himself unto them, and laying aside the Robes of Majesty, embraced them with the tenderness of a brother; and gave them the richest part of *Egypt*, even the land of *Goshen* to inhabit and dwell therein: But still they were his brothers, nay his elder brothers too, whom *Joseph* thus forgave and obliged. And did our King treat his Rebellious Subjects with less pity and compassion? Some few excepted of those impious Regicides, who had the Impudence to sit in pretended Justice upon, and sentence to death the Sacred Person of his Royal Father: Those few excepted, I say, for example sake, whom neither his own Piety, nor the cries of his Martyred Father's blood, nor the just Resentments of his then Loyal Parliament would suffer to live any longer: With what mercy did he receive all the rest? So far was he from punishing, that he seemed more concerned for them, than they for themselves. *How impatient was he, till all his Rebellious Subjects might know themselves safe and secure; witness his hastning and urging forwards his Gracious Act of Indemnity? Wherein he excluded no cursing Shimei's, or other Traitors of a larger size, but gave a general pardon to all; as if, like David, after the quelling of Absalon's Rebellion, 2 Sam. 19. 22. he likewise were resolved to say to any repining sons of Zeruiah, Shall there any man be put to death?*

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Know I not, that I am this day King over Great Britain and Ireland? And if his Justice hath, as of late, seized upon some incorrigible Traitors: Is it not, because all kinder methods of his mercy were lost upon them, and they became doubly guilty of ingratitude, as well as Treason? But some may say, that Joseph never punished his offending brethren afterwards, I shall easily grant it; but then it is as true, that his brethren were so far from reiterating their iniquities, that chap. 50. vers. 17. As if they had not given testimonies enough before of their Repentance, after 17 years, you find them renewing it, praying him to forgive them their trespasses against him. But more than 20 years are past, since our King's Act of Oblivion, without any penitent Applications hitherto; instead thereof, we have heard of repeated Conspiracies, and of late intended Insurrections and Massacres of the King's Loyal Subjects, of Blunderbusses to take away his Life, with his Royal Brothers, by whose sole Grace they hold their own. And now, Beloved, one would think, that these Examples of Joseph and our present Sovereign, might prevail with any, to lay aside Anger, and to pardon their Enemies; few ever receiving such wrongs; and I wish to God I could not say, few ever so pardoning. But if this be not of force enough, let me intreat those haughty spirits to meditate upon the Lord of Glory, descending from Heaven, and becoming a servant for our sakes; and after 33, or 34 years converse upon Earth, submitting himself to the shamefull and painfull death of the Cross, whereon he received all the affronts, and sharp usage, wherewith malicious cruelty could

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you may understand the poor and necessitous; and by *Joseph*, are represented those whom God hath blessed with riches, to the end they may supply out of their store to them, who labour under need and poverty. *Joseph* so well managed his Province, and so effectually provided against that raging famine that then was in the land, that I read in several Histories; That the *Egyptians* supposed him to be more than man; and therefore in after-ages adored him as a God, under the name of *Serapis*: I am sure all ye, who abound in Riches, have the same honourable employment entrusted to you, though your Province is not so large; but then you have your Commission from a greater King than *Pharaoh*, viz. *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. And if the poor should want relief, when you can assist them, you will have this reproach upon you, that whereas *Joseph* supplied the wants of a great Kingdom with the adjacent Countries, in an extreme want of seven years; you suffer a few indigent people to starve in a great plenty of all things. But I hope better things of you, especially having been an eye-witness; how free and liberal you have been at our last Annual meetings. And here, if I may guide your hands, in your more liberal distributions, *I would propose those Loyal persons as larger Objects of your kindness, who either suffered in the service of the late Royal Martyr; or, of late, in their faithfull adherence to our present Sovereign; when the Tragedy of Forty-one was, if possible, in more dismal circumstances, designed to be re-acted, by some of the same men, but all of the same Principles with the former.*

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And I am sure my Text will justifie my advice ; wherein though *Joseph* entertained all his brethren at a feast, yet Benjamin's *Mess* was five times so much as any of theirs.

Thirdly and lastly, Did *Joseph*, a pious, chaste, and religious Man, yet entertain his brethren after that manner, as you have heard ? and was his Practice followed by the *Jews* under the Law, by our blessed Saviour and the Primitive Christians ? Why then, let us not regard the unjust censures of unreasonable men, as to our present Assembly. Those Writers did but dream, who fancied the fruit of the forbidden tree, to be that of the Vine : No, no, God never made the Vine onely to tempt Mankind, and that he should not taste thereof. The Impostor *Mahomet* indeed denied it to his Worshippers ; but God himself was pleased to accept of it in Sacrifices, and the blessed Jesus put himself to the expence of a Miracle, that men might know his sense thereof. But here let me beg of you, not to misconstrue what I have said ; and do not think, that whilst I plead for the innocent mirth of Christians, that you may behave yourselves, as if you were at the *Roman* Bacchanals, or, which is very like, their Carnivals now.

I shall sum up all in a word or two, by way of Exhortation. Do not, O do not abuse God's goodness ; and that which he hath indulged to us, to cheer and refresh us ; Let us not make use of it to the dishonouring his Image in us, to the unmaning our selves, and putting on the shapes of
beasts,

beasts, as too too many doe. I shall give you but one direction herein; be sure none of you touch that glass, whereby you may be rendred less fitting for God's service. As for drunkenness and debauchery, let it not be so much as mentioned, as becometh such Christian Meetings; When you are at Dinner, remember, that as the *Jews* after their Sacrifices, so you just before were worshipping God at his holy Temple; Let your carriage at the following entertainment baffle the idle clamours of those who oppose such Meetings of Love; Shew to them, that you can be sober, as well as cheerful; and that you can be men, without laying aside the Christian.

Let this meeting be like that of the Primitive Christians, of whom *Pliny* wrote to the Emperour *Trajan*, an engagement to Vertue, and an abhorrence from sin and iniquity. Be constant in your Allegiance to our English *Joseph*; Continue true members of Our establish'd Church, which, best of all others, teaches how to render to God, the things which are God's; and to *Cæsar*, the things which are *Cæsar's*. Let us follow St. *Paul's* advice, and doe good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith; Nay, let our charity be more extensive, and let us imbrace even the Dissenters themselves, though not by prostituting the Churches Orders to their peevishness and wantonness, but by praying for them, that they may return to their duty to our common Mother, the establish't Church of *England*, that so at length we may all be loving brethren, and with one unanimous consent, may with one heart, and one voice glorifie God, the Father of us all.

all. If any of you have had that grand happiness of Mankind, a true friend, doe your utmost to preserve him so: Nay, if any of you hath an enemy, who hath done you wrong or injury, imitate *Joseph*, and our present Sovereign; but above all, our blessed Saviour, single out that person, and forgive him: If any Object of Charity comes into your thoughts, especially of poor loyal persons, take hold of the occasion, accordingly as God hath enabled you. These and the like things, if you perform, you need not fear, but that this following Banquet will be an Antepast of an eternal Feast in the Heavens; Which God grant. *Amen.*

F I N I S.
